

BioMap and Living Waters

Guiding Land Conservation for Biodiversity in Massachusetts

Core Habitats of Dennis

This report and associated map provide information about important sites for biodiversity conservation in your area.

This information is intended for conservation planning, and is not intended for use in state regulations.

Produced by:

**Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

Produced in 2004



BioMap and Living Waters: Guiding Land Conservation for Biodiversity in Massachusetts

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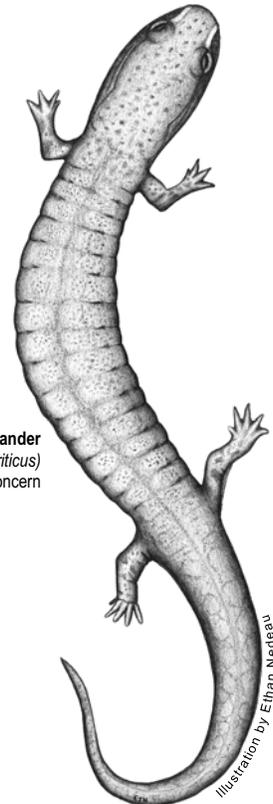
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* Depending on the location of Core Habitats,
your city or town may not have all of these sections.

Spring Salamander
(*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*)
Species of Special Concern



Funding for this project was made available by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, contributions to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund, and through the State Wildlife Grants Program of the US Fish & Wildlife Service.



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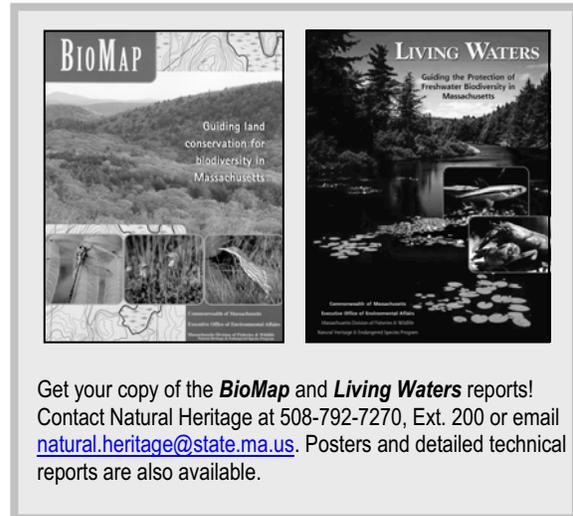
Introduction

In this report, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program provides you with site-specific biodiversity information for your area. Protecting our biodiversity today will help ensure the full variety of species and natural communities that comprise our native flora and fauna will persist for generations to come.

The information in this report is the result of two statewide biodiversity conservation planning projects, *BioMap* and *Living Waters*. The goal of the BioMap project, completed in 2001, was to identify and delineate the most important areas for the long-term viability of terrestrial, wetland, and estuarine elements of biodiversity in Massachusetts. The goal of the Living Waters project, completed in 2003, was to identify and delineate the rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds that are important for freshwater biodiversity in the Commonwealth. These two conservation plans are based on documented observations of rare species, natural communities, and exemplary habitats.

What is a Core Habitat?

Both BioMap and Living Waters delineate *Core Habitats* that identify the most critical sites for biodiversity conservation across the state. Core Habitats represent habitat for the state's most viable rare plant and animal populations and include exemplary natural communities and aquatic habitats. Core Habitats represent a wide diversity of rare species and natural communities (see Table 1), and these areas are also thought to contain virtually all of the other described species in Massachusetts. Statewide, BioMap Core Habitats encompass 1,380,000 acres of uplands and wetlands, and Living Waters identifies 429 Core Habitats in rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds.



Core Habitats and Land Conservation

One of the most effective ways to protect biodiversity for future generations is to protect Core Habitats from adverse human impacts through land conservation. For Living Waters Core Habitats, protection efforts should focus on the *riparian areas*, the areas of land adjacent to water bodies. A naturally vegetated buffer that extends 330 feet (100 meters) from the water's edge helps to maintain cooler water temperature and to maintain the nutrients, energy, and natural flow of water needed by freshwater species.

In Support of Core Habitats

To further ensure the protection of Core Habitats and Massachusetts' biodiversity in the long-term, the BioMap and Living Waters projects identify two additional areas that help support Core Habitats.

In BioMap, areas shown as *Supporting Natural Landscape* provide buffers around the Core Habitats, connectivity between Core Habitats, sufficient space for ecosystems to function, and contiguous undeveloped habitat for common species. Supporting Natural Landscape was



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generated using a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) model, and its exact boundaries are less important than the general areas that it identifies. Supporting Natural Landscape represents potential land protection priorities once Core Habitat protection has been addressed.

In Living Waters, *Critical Supporting Watersheds* highlight the immediate portion of the watershed that sustains, or possibly degrades, each freshwater Core Habitat. These areas were also identified using a GIS model. Critical Supporting Watersheds represent developed and undeveloped lands, and can be quite large. Critical Supporting Watersheds can be helpful in land-use planning, and while they are not shown on these maps, they can be viewed in the Living Waters report or downloaded from www.mass.gov/mgis.

Understanding Core Habitat Species, Community, and Habitat Lists

What's in the List?

Included in this report is a list of the species, natural communities, and/or aquatic habitats for each Core Habitat in your city or town. The lists are organized by Core Habitat number.

For the larger Core Habitats that span more than one town, the species and community lists refer to the entire Core Habitat, not just the portion that falls within your city or town. For a list of all the state-listed rare species within your city or town's boundary, whether or not they are in Core Habitat, please see the town rare species lists available at www.nhesp.org.

The list of species and communities within a Core Habitat contains only the species and

Table 1. The number of rare species and types of natural communities explicitly included in the BioMap and Living Waters conservation plans, relative to the total number of native species statewide.

BioMap		
Biodiversity Group	Species and Verified Natural Community Types	
	Included in BioMap	Total Statewide
Vascular Plants	246	1,538
Birds	21	221 breeding species
Reptiles	11	25
Amphibians	6	21
Mammals	4	85
Moths and Butterflies	52	An estimated 2,500 to 3,000
Damselflies and Dragonflies	25	An estimated 165
Beetles	10	An estimated 2,500 to 4,000
Natural Communities	92	> 105 community types
Living Waters		
Biodiversity Group	Species	
	Included in Living Waters	Total Statewide
Aquatic Vascular Plants	23	114
Fishes	11	57
Mussels	7	12
Aquatic Invertebrates	23	An estimated > 2500

natural communities that were explicitly included in a given BioMap or Living Waters Core Habitat. Other rare species or examples of other natural communities may fall within the Core Habitat, but for various reasons are not included in the list. For instance, there are a few rare species that are omitted from the list or summary because of their particular sensitivity to the threat of collection. Likewise, the content of many very small Core Habitats are not described in this report or list, often because they contain a single location of a rare plant



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species. Some Core Habitats were created for suites of common species, such as forest birds, which are particularly threatened by habitat fragmentation. In these cases, the individual common species are not listed.

What does 'Status' mean?

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife determines a status category for each rare species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, M.G.L. c.131A, and its implementing regulations, 321 CMR 10.00. Rare species are categorized as Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern according to the following:

- **Endangered** species are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range or are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts.
- **Threatened** species are likely to become Endangered in Massachusetts in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.
- **Special Concern** species have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked or occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become Threatened in Massachusetts.

In addition, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program maintains an unofficial **watch list** of plants that are tracked due to potential conservation interest or concern, but are not regulated under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act or other laws or regulations. Likewise, described natural communities are not regulated any laws or regulations, but they can help to identify ecologically important areas that are worthy of protection. The status of natural

Legal Protection of Biodiversity

BioMap and Living Waters present a powerful vision of what Massachusetts would look like with full protection of the land that supports most of our biodiversity. To create this vision, some populations of state-listed rare species were deemed more likely to survive over the long-term than others.

Regardless of their potential viability, all sites of state-listed species have full legal protection under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (M.G.L. c.131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00). Habitat of state-listed wildlife is also protected under the Wetlands Protection Act Regulations (310 CMR 10.37 and 10.59). The **Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas** shows **Priority Habitats**, which are used for regulation under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M.G.L. c.30) and **Estimated Habitats**, which are used for regulation of rare wildlife habitat under the Wetlands Protection Act. For more information on rare species regulations, see the *Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas*, available from the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program in book and CD formats.

BioMap and Living Waters are conservation planning tools and do not, in any way, supplant the Estimated and Priority Habitat Maps which have regulatory significance. Unless and until the combined BioMap and Living Waters vision is fully realized, we must continue to protect all populations of our state-listed species and their habitats through environmental regulation.

communities reflects the documented number and acreages of each community type in the state:

- **Critically Imperiled** communities typically have 5 or fewer documented sites or have very few remaining acres in the state.
- **Imperiled** communities typically have 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.
- **Vulnerable** communities typically have 21-100 sites or limited acreage across the state.
- **Secure** communities typically have over 100 sites or abundant acreage across the state; however excellent examples are identified as Core Habitat to ensure continued protection.



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Understanding Core Habitat Summaries

Following the BioMap and Living Waters Core Habitat species and community lists, there is a descriptive summary of each Core Habitat that occurs in your city or town. This summary highlights some of the outstanding characteristics of each Core Habitat, and will help you learn more about your city or town's biodiversity. You can find out more information about many of these species and natural communities by looking at specific *fact sheets* at www.nhesp.org.

Next Steps

BioMap and Living Waters were created in part to help cities and towns prioritize their land protection efforts. While there are many reasons to conserve land – drinking water protection, recreation, agriculture, aesthetics, and others – BioMap and Living Waters Core Habitats are especially helpful to municipalities seeking to protect the rare species, natural communities, and overall biodiversity within their boundaries. Please use this report and map along with the rare species and community fact sheets to appreciate and understand the biological treasures in your city or town.

Protecting Larger Core Habitats

Core Habitats vary considerably in size. For example, the average BioMap Core Habitat is 800 acres, but Core Habitats can range from less than 10 acres to greater than 100,000 acres. These larger areas reflect the amount of land needed by some animal species for breeding, feeding, nesting, overwintering, and long-term survival. Protecting areas of this size can be

very challenging, and requires developing partnerships with neighboring towns.

Prioritizing the protection of certain areas within larger Core Habitats can be accomplished through further consultation with Natural Heritage Program biologists, and through additional field research to identify the most important areas of the Core Habitat.

Additional Information

If you have any questions about this report, or if you need help protecting land for biodiversity in your community, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program staff looks forward to working with you.

Contact the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program:

by Phone 508-792-7270, Ext. 200

by Fax: 508-792-7821

by Email: natural.heritage@state.ma.us.

by Mail: North Drive
Westborough, MA 01581

The GIS datalayers of BioMap and Living Waters Core Habitats are available for download from MassGIS: www.mass.gov/mgis

Check out www.nhesp.org for information on:

- Rare species in your town
- Rare species fact sheets
- BioMap and Living Waters projects
- Natural Heritage publications, including:
 - * Field guides
 - * Natural Heritage Atlas, and more!



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BioMap: Species and Natural Communities

Dennis

Core Habitat BM1256

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Salt Reedgrass	<i>Spartina cynosuroides</i>	Threatened

Invertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Coastal Heathland Cutworm	<i>Abagrotis nefascia benjamini</i>	Special Concern
Straight-lined Mallow moth	<i>Bagisara rectifascia</i>	Special Concern

Vertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Threatened

Core Habitat BM1264

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Small Site for Rare Plant		

Core Habitat BM1275

Invertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
New England Bluet	<i>Enallagma laterale</i>	Special Concern

Core Habitat BM1277

Vertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Special Concern
Least Tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Special Concern
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Threatened
Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Endangered



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BioMap: Species and Natural Communities

Dennis

Core Habitat BM1283

Natural Communities

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Coastal Plain Pondshore		Imperiled

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Plymouth Gentian	<i>Sabatia kennedyana</i>	Special Concern
Two-Flowered Rush	<i>Juncus biflorus</i>	Watch Listed

Invertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Pine Barrens Bluet	<i>Enallagma recurvatum</i>	Threatened

Core Habitat BM1288

Natural Communities

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Coastal Plain Pondshore		Imperiled

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Long-Beaked Bald-Sedge	<i>Rhynchospora scirpoides</i>	Special Concern
Plymouth Gentian	<i>Sabatia kennedyana</i>	Special Concern
Redroot	<i>Lachnanthes caroliana</i>	Special Concern
Terete Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria teres</i>	Special Concern
Wright's Panic-grass	<i>Dichantherium wrightianum</i>	Special Concern

Invertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Comet Darner	<i>Anax longipes</i>	Special Concern
New England Bluet	<i>Enallagma laterale</i>	Special Concern



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BioMap: Species and Natural Communities

Dennis

Pine Barrens Bluet

Enallagma recurvatum

Threatened

Core Habitat BM1324

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Small Site for Rare Plant

Core Habitat BM1335

Vertebrates

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

King Rail

Rallus elegans

Threatened

Least Bittern

Ixobrychus exilis

Endangered

Northern Parula

Parula americana

Threatened

Core Habitat BM1340

Invertebrates

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Water-Willow Stem Borer

Papaipema sulphurata

Threatened

Core Habitat BM1372

Vertebrates

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

Special Concern

Least Tern

Sterna antillarum

Special Concern

Piping Plover

Charadrius melodus

Threatened

Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii

Endangered



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BioMap: Core Habitat Summaries

Dennis

Core Habitat BM1256

This Core Habitat, centered on Quivett Creek, contains a variety of habitats for rare plants and animals. It includes beaches that support breeding Piping Plovers, marshes that provide habitat for the Salt Reedgrass and rare moth species, as well as maritime habitats that support the Coastal Heathland Cutworm moth.

Plants

Two large, vigorous populations of Salt Reedgrass, a relative of the more common cordgrasses, are found within marshes of this coastal Core Habitat.

Invertebrates

Rare moth species occurring within this Core Habitat include the Coastal Heathland Cutworm, which inhabits the dunegrass grasslands and maritime shrublands, and the Straight-lined Mallow moth, which inhabits the marsh. It is likely that this Core Habitat supports additional rare coastal moth species, such as the Spartina Borer moth.

Vertebrates

The beaches of Quivett Neck and Coles Pond support breeding Piping Plovers. Potential threats to nesting coastal waterbirds include habitat alteration and loss, human disturbance, and predation. Annual protection from these threats is needed.

Core Habitat BM1275

Invertebrates

This Core Habitat includes Cedar Pond, which is habitat for the rare New England Bluet damselfly. Although surrounded by development, Cedar Pond is located less than 5 km from populations of the New England Bluet at Bakers Pond and Run Pond in Dennis, at Elbow Pond in Brewster, and at Robbins Pond in Harwich, which allows for dispersal of individuals between these various locations. Apparently only a very small fraction of this Core Habitat is currently protected.

Core Habitat BM1277

Vertebrates

This Core Habitat encompasses coastal waterbird breeding colonies at Chapin Beach and Gray's Beach. These sites support breeding Piping Plovers, Least Terns, Common Terns, and, in some years, Roseate Terns. Gray's Beach hosts one of the most important Common Tern colonies in the state. Potential threats to nesting coastal waterbirds include habitat alteration and loss, human disturbance, and predation. Annual protection from these threats is needed.



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BioMap: Core Habitat Summaries

Dennis

Core Habitat BM1283

Natural Communities

This Core Habitat contains a moderately well-buffered Coastal Plain Pondshore community in good condition. Although within the zone of groundwater contribution for four public water supply wells, it supports an intact pondshore with characteristic vegetation diversity and zonation pattern. Coastal Plain Pondshores are globally rare herbaceous communities of exposed pondshores with a distinct Coastal Plain flora. Water levels change with the water table, typically leaving an exposed shoreline in late summer where many rare species grow.

Invertebrates

This Core Habitat includes Aunt Pattys Pond, which is habitat for the Threatened Pine Barrens Bluet damselfly. Although surrounded by development, Aunt Pattys Pond is located less than 5 km from populations of the Pine Barrens Bluet at Bakers Pond, Grassy Pond, and Run Pond in Dennis, at Elbow Pond in Brewster, and at Robbins Pond in Harwich. The proximity of these habitats allows for occasional dispersal of damselflies between these locations, which is important for the long-term viability of these populations. This Core Habitat appears to be protected, as it is located almost entirely within municipal watershed land. However, water withdrawals may affect the water level in this pond, which may in turn have some detrimental impact on the damselfly population.

Core Habitat BM1288

This Core Habitat in Dennis and Brewster contains a cluster of high-quality Coastal Plain Ponds, a globally rare type of natural community. These pondshore habitats and the surrounding forests support several rare species of plants, damselflies, and dragonflies. While part of this Core Habitat is on protected municipal watershed land, conservation of the remaining unprotected lands will help ensure the long-term viability of rare species inhabiting the area.

Natural Communities

This Core Habitat contains a cluster of Coastal Plain Pondshore communities that are in excellent condition and partially to well-buffered by surrounding natural vegetation; however, their hydrology may be affected by their proximity to two zones of groundwater contribution to public water supply wells. Coastal Plain Pondshores are globally rare herbaceous communities of exposed pondshores with a distinct Coastal Plain flora. Water levels change with the water table, typically leaving an exposed shoreline in late summer where many rare species grow.

Plants

Two outstanding populations of Long-Beaked Bald-Sedge, a tiny, brownish plant Species of Special Concern, occur within the sandy shorelines of this Core Habitat. A very large and robust population of Wright's Panic-grass is also found here, along with several other smaller populations.



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BioMap: Core Habitat Summaries

Dennis

Invertebrates

Coastal Plain Ponds within this Core Habitat, including Flax, Run, Simmons, Clay, Grassy, Bakers, and Pine Ponds, as well as numerous smaller ponds and surrounding forest all provide habitat for rare dragonflies and damselflies. Species found here include the Comet Darner, the New England Bluet, and the Pine Barrens Bluet. All of these ponds are located within a large area of relatively undeveloped and unfragmented landscape, allowing for unimpeded dispersal of dragonflies, damselflies, and other invertebrate species. This Core Habitat is just to the west of Core Habitat in Brewster and Harwich, allowing additional dispersal between these two areas.

Core Habitat BM1335

Vertebrates

This Core Habitat contains fresh and brackish emergent marshes that provide some of the most important breeding habitat for rare marsh birds on Cape Cod. In particular, the marshes dominated by cattails provide breeding habitat for Least Bitterns and King Rails. Riparian and adjacent upland forests provide breeding habitat for Northern Parula warblers. Numerous areas of upland buffers remain to be protected around the edges of these wetlands in order to maintain water quality and hydrologic conditions and to buffer the wetlands from noise and visual disturbance.

Core Habitat BM1340

Invertebrates

This Core Habitat includes an area of swampy, shallow wetlands with Water-willow that is habitat for the Water-willow Stem Borer moth, a Threatened species that is found nowhere in the world outside of Massachusetts. Although relatively small and surrounded by development, this Core Habitat is located less than 10 km from other habitats for the Water-willow Stem Borer, including Core Habitats in Yarmouth, Harwich, and Brewster. This proximity allows for occasional movement of individual moths among all of these sites, which is important to maintain a viable population of this species. About half of this Core Habitat is located on protected municipal land, but the remainder appears to be unprotected.

Core Habitat BM1372

Vertebrates

West Dennis Beach supports breeding Piping Plovers, Least Terns, Common Terns, and, in the past, Roseate Terns. Potential threats to nesting coastal waterbirds include habitat alteration and loss, human disturbance, and predation. Annual protection from these threats is needed.



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Living Waters: Species and Habitats

Dennis

Core Habitat LW196

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Resupinate Bladderwort

Utricularia resupinata

Threatened

Core Habitat LW197

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Resupinate Bladderwort

Utricularia resupinata

Threatened



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Living Waters: Core Habitat Summaries

Dennis

Core Habitat LW196

One of only nine known populations of the rare Resupinate Bladderwort in the state inhabits the peaty margin of this small Coastal Plain pond. This tiny plant is usually submerged underwater, and purple flowers are produced only when the habitat is exposed during periods of extremely low water. Bladderworts are carnivorous plants, trapping tiny aquatic animals in their pouch-like "bladders." Native freshwater plants like the Resupinate Bladderwort are an important component of aquatic communities, and warrant conservation attention if we are to maintain healthy freshwater ecosystems.

Core Habitat LW197

One of only nine known populations of the rare Resupinate Bladderwort in the state inhabits the peaty margin of this small Coastal Plain pond. This tiny plant is usually submerged underwater, and purple flowers are produced only when the habitat is exposed during periods of extremely low water. Bladderworts are carnivorous plants, trapping tiny aquatic animals in their pouch-like "bladders." Native freshwater plants like the Resupinate Bladderwort are an important component of aquatic communities, and warrant conservation attention if we are to maintain healthy freshwater ecosystems.



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Please contribute on your Massachusetts income tax form or directly to the



Natural Heritage &
Endangered Species Fund

To learn more about the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program and the Commonwealth's rare species, visit our web site at: www.nhesp.org.